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Introduction

What Is Social-Emotional Learning?

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) helps students recognize and understand their emotions, cope with emotional situations, and develop empathy. These skills are crucial to students' development and can help them navigate responsible decision-making for the rest of their lives.

According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), SEL involves five areas of competency:

- ✦ Self-Awareness—knowing your own emotions
- ✦ Social Awareness—understanding others' emotions and dealing with social situations
- ✦ Self-Management—regulating your own emotions
- ✦ Responsible Decision Making—solving problems and having accountability
- ✦ Relationship Skills—establishing relationships and communicating with others

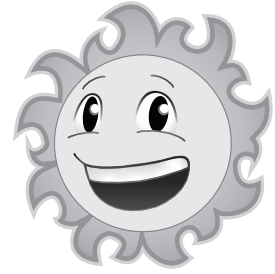
While SEL has become more widely discussed recently, the concept dates back to research that began in the early 1960s. Various studies over the years have found that SEL has proven to help students with:

- ✦ Goal setting and accomplishment
- ✦ Self-assessment and self-control
- ✦ Decreasing physical aggression
- ✦ Improving academic proficiency

When students learn how to cope with their emotions, they are better able to give and receive feedback, bounce back from disappointments, and focus when they need to—all of which can help them excel academically. An emotionally well-adjusted student is a successful student.

Beyond helping students perform better academically, learning social emotional skills early in life can help students thrive throughout their lives. SEL teaches students valuable qualities that will benefit them in their future jobs, academics, and personal pursuits.

Daily Emotional Reflections



Why start the day with SEL? Many successful people start their day with mindfulness: meditation, daily journaling, morning affirmations, etc. That's because centering yourself first thing in the morning gets you focused and ready to tackle whatever your day has in store.

For students, taking a few moments each morning to check in on how they're feeling can start a habit that they can build on for the rest of their lives.

Each of the exercises in this book is designed to help students spend a few moments in the morning to check in with themselves, and to learn a little bit about the spectrum of human emotions.

When your students start their day with emotional awareness, they will be more likely to carry that awareness with them throughout the day, helping them to make good choices and have empathy both inside and outside of your classroom.



How to Use This Book — The Emotions —



Each of the first sixteen units explores a different emotion, with two activities each devoted to these fundamental aspects of SEL:

✦ **Defining the Emotion**

Explaining what the emotion is; asking students to reflect on what they already know about it

✦ **Identifying the Emotion in Others**

Asking students to think about what the emotion looks like in other people; helping to develop empathy

✦ **Identifying the Emotion in Yourself**

Detecting how the emotion looks and feels in their own experience; developing self-awareness and self-assessment

✦ **Strategies for Dealing with the Emotion**

Exploring different coping strategies for the emotion; helping to develop self-regulation and encouraging healthy social interactions

✦ **Putting It All Together**

Reflecting on what they have discovered about the emotion; exploring what strategies they will try in the future

Note: You don't have to work through this book in order; you can start or end with any emotion.

Introduction (cont.)

The final unit, All the Feelings, is intended for students to experience once they have learned about all of the different emotions. This unit gives them a chance to reflect on how the different emotions can complement and conflict with each other, and offers ideas on how to manage a mix of feelings.



— The Emojis —

In today's social world, most students are very familiar with emojis and the feelings they represent. In this book they are presented as a simple, visual way for students to identify with different feelings.

In each unit, there are at least two activities that start with an emoji emotional check-in. This is a great and simple way for students to check in with their own feelings first thing.

How do you feel today? Circle each face that matches your feelings. Or draw your own.



Joyful



Disappointed



Frustrated



Calm



— Mindful Moments & Yoga Breaks —

Each unit also offers a meditation suggestion and a breakdown of a simple yoga pose that complements the emotion featured in that unit. Breathing and movement exercises could be done individually, or throughout the week by the entire class.

— Fun Facts, Quotes & Tips —

Throughout the book, you will also find fun facts, quotes, and quick tips about the featured emotion of the unit. These can be interesting discussion starters as you segue into the next part of your lesson plan.

Creating a Kind Classroom

A kind and welcoming classroom is an ideal place for students to learn and discover more about their feelings.

It's important that your students feel encouraged to discuss feelings when they come up, and that beyond these morning exercises, your class is a safe place for them to feel all of their emotions.

Here are some other ideas and activities to expand your SEL teachings beyond morning reflections.

- ✦ Create a Mindfulness or Calm-Down Corner that is a quiet space for students to reflect; a few pillows and a yoga mat can create a welcoming place for breathing or journaling.
- ✦ Watch the movie *Inside Out* as a class, and invite a discussion afterward about the emotions featured in the film.
- ✦ Incorporate yoga and/or breathing and meditation as part of your daily or weekly lessons, maybe creating regular events like Meditation Monday or Yoga Friday.
- ✦ Model good emotional behavior—talk about how you're feeling, and point out the feelings and emotions of characters in stories featured in your class.
- ✦ Play a feelings game such as Emotional Charades, in which students are given an emotion to act out for others.
- ✦ Create a classroom poster of coping activities that students can choose from when their emotions are distracting them from focusing.
- ✦ Have the class make a collage of positive affirmations that can be referred to throughout the year as needed.
- ✦ Encourage and reward random acts of kindness both inside and outside of the classroom.

“There’s no ‘should’ or ‘should not’ when it comes to having feelings. They’re part of who we are and their origins are beyond our control. When we can believe that, we may find it easier to make constructive choices about what to do with those feelings.”
—Fred Rogers





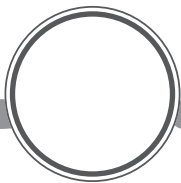
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What does it mean to feel calm?



Calm is a happy, relaxed feeling. When you're feeling peaceful, you can say, "I feel calm."

What color would you choose for calm? Color in the circle with that color. Then, draw a picture about feeling calm using only that color.



What do you know about feeling calm? _____

Mindful Moment

Belly Breath helps you feel calm. Sit down and close your eyes. Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly. Try to take a deep breath down into your belly. Feel your belly get bigger with your breath. As you slowly exhale, feel your belly get smaller. Repeat five times.



Name: _____ Date: _____

My Peaceful Place

Imagine the calmest place you can think of. It can be a real place. It can also be a place you made up.

It can be a room, a building, or a city. It's up to you!

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. Imagine all the details of this peaceful place.

- What colors are there?
- What does it smell like?
- What does it sound like?
- What does it feel like?

Draw a picture of your peaceful place, and write about it below.



Name: _____ Date: _____

How do you feel today? Circle each face that matches your feelings. Or draw your own.



Friendly



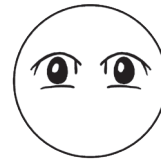
Worried



Proud



Tired



Here's what I know now about calm:

When I'm calm, I can... _____

When I need to calm myself down, I can... _____

Next time you are feeling mad or sad, try to remember your calm feeling. It can help you decide what to do next!